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Application of an intergovernmental organization for observer status with the Economic and Social Council

Letter dated 10 October 2005 from the Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

It is a pleasure, in my capacity as Director General of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), to submit this application for permanent observer status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

IICA is the rural and agricultural development organization for the Americas. It is a 34-member state institution that forms a key part of the inter-American system. IICA was founded in 1942 and is headquartered in Costa Rica. We maintain offices in all 34 member countries, as well as Spain, IICA's only associate member. The governing body of the Institute is the Inter-American Board of Agriculture (IABA), comprising the agricultural ministers or secretaries of the member States.

In keeping with the mandates it receives from IABA, IICA provides technical cooperation, training, information and brokering services to its members. IICA does not assume political or policy positions. It does, however, provide information to policymakers on relevant issues. The Institute focuses on six principal strategic areas:

(a) Trade and agribusiness development;

(b) Technology and innovation;

(c) Agricultural health and food safety;

(d) Sustainable rural development;

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(e) Education and training;

(f) Information and communication.

The mission of IICA is to support the member States in their pursuit of progress and prosperity in the hemisphere through the modernization of the rural sector, the promotion of food security and the development of an agricultural sector that is competitive, technologically prepared, environmentally managed and socially equitable for the peoples of the Americas.

IICA activities are guided by a 15-year strategic plan based on the Declaration and Plan of Action of the Third Summit of the Americas, which was held in Quebec City in 2001, and subsequent mandates from other summits. There exists great complementarity between the Millennium Development Goals and IICA mandates and priorities. This, it seems to me, would make for an excellent opportunity for IICA to work with the Economic and Social Council as a permanent observer and allow us to exchange valuable information, ideas and experiences to achieve shared goals.

The official document of our Institute explains in detail the structure and operation of IICA and will give you a greater idea of how our two institutions could collaborate to reduce poverty, create opportunity and achieve a more just and peaceful world.

(*Signed*) Chelston W. D. **Brathwaite**
Director General